

When the FAA needed to respond because of an emergency, they were able to do so quickly and efficiently.

Why do we want to privatize these jobs and risk putting anyone out of work right now?

Unemployment is well over 6% right now. For Hispanics it is nearly 9% and for African Americans it is nearly 11%. We must not pass legislation that will put more people out of work and simply hurt more working families.

This is a system that is not broke—so why does it need to be fixed?

The safety and security of the American people should not be the responsibility of the lowest bidder.

It is a core responsibility of our Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to recommit this conference report and any further efforts to privatize our air traffic control system.

WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE ON EFFECTS OF SYRIA AC- COUNTABILITY ACT ON IRAQI ECONOMY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, amid the U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority's push for a free and democratic society in Iraq, this House has been constructing a dangerous wall threatening Syria. The recently passed legislation, H.R. 1828, will not help alleviate the incessant attacks that our soldiers are facing daily in Iraq, as an integral part in ensuring their safety is an immediate boost to provide Iraqis with jobs and prospects for prosperity. But the SAA will only prove to upset these efforts. Hugh Pope elaborates on this point in the article "Iraq Adds Complexity for U.S., Syria," which appeared in the October 20th issue of the Wall Street Journal. I recommend the following article to all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, and to the administration.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Oct. 20, 2003]

IRAQ ADDS COMPLEXITY FOR U.S., SYRIA

AS WASHINGTON SANCTIONS DAMASCUS, AMERICAN TROOPS SEEK SYRIAN TRADE PARTNERS

(By Hugh Pope)

MOSUL, IRAQ.—While the House of Representatives was voting to adopt a new raft of Syrian sanctions in Washington last week, here in northern Iraq the 101st Airborne Division was doing everything in its power to burnish economic relations with Syria.

"It's the freest trade there has ever been here," said Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne's 22,000 troops, in an Oct. 10 war room briefing for U.S. visitors involved in the campaign to promote American achievements in Iraq. He proudly called for the next slide, an image from the day the Iraq-Syria frontier post opened for business. It featured a Syrian border monument with a huge picture of that nation's late president, Hafez al-Assad.

Mr. Assad's son Bashar is now Syria's head of state, and the sanctions, headed for the Senate, are meant to punish Damascus until the U.S. says it has stopped sponsoring terrorism.

But the burgeoning relationship between Syria and American-controlled northern Iraq illustrates a divergence of interests between

Middle Eastern priorities in Washington and the more immediate, on-the-ground needs of the U.S. occupation forces in Iraq, who seek to bring Iraqis the jobs and prosperity they view as a key step in ending attacks on U.S. forces.

"Our No. 1 problem is unemployment," said Gen. Petraeus, who has noted a falling-off in supplies of discretionary funds that his officers use to keep projects going forward in his area of responsibility. He has spent \$28 million so far and says he needs more. "The north has the military forces it needs," he said. "All we need is money."

Spurring the local economy is a critical element in Gen. Petraeus's campaign, and he has used his funds to restart a long-dormant asphalt factory, uncap local oil wells and work to bring irrigation to a new area of wheat fields.

Gen. Petraeus didn't say whether he had had friction with the civilian U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad over his relationship with the Syrians. An officer of the 101st said its general practice was not to confront the CPA but to do what they thought best and "apologize later rather than seek permission first." CPA officials said they had no comment on the wider question of trade with Syria, which also takes place elsewhere in Iraq, since no new U.S. sanctions were yet in force.

But trade is vital to this city of 1.7 million and the surrounding region, and one of Gen. Petraeus's first priorities upon taking control of the north was to open the Turkish and Syrian borders. Now, he said, some 500 to 700 trucks arrive from Syria each day, paying a toll of \$10 for a pickup and \$20 for a bigger rig. He has also pioneered easy, visa-free travel between Mosul province, home to about 12% of Iraq's 25 million people, and the neighboring Syrian region.

To help Iraq cope with its huge electricity deficit, the general dreamed up a scheme to buy power from Syria in return for Iraqi oil. Speeding the process with his fleet of helicopters, he brought together officials from Damascus, men from the new ministries in Baghdad and the best of the 60 lawyers in his own force to hammer out a deal.

Negotiations dragged on, and the general feared they would collapse over bureaucratic details. To break the logjam, he proposed that his engineers swing open the valves on the Iraqi oil-export pipeline, the Syrians switch on the power lines, and the haggling proceed at leisure over the exact final price. Everyone agreed.

Six weeks later, the informal arrangement appears to be working well. Gen. Petraeus said, even if the power from Syria represents well under 10% of local production.

Security hasn't been neglected. Some 800 border guards have been retrained and set up at the old border post to keep an eye out for Islamist and other Arab fighters, some of them Syrian, who have been slipping over the border to attack U.S. troops. But on the tables of Mosul, breakfast now includes Syrian apricot jam.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall vote #354, #355, #356, #357 and #359. If I were present I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote #356, #358 and "yea" on rollcall vote #354, #355, #357 and #359.

RECOGNIZING NAVY DAY

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize "Navy Day," observed on October 27th, and to pay tribute to the impressive work done at the naval bases in my district, Patuxent River Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head Surface Warfare Center and St. Inigoes. The Fifth Congressional District's naval bases are critical facilities that help our nation meet the threats and challenges of a new century, and their geographic proximity to the nation's capital also makes them valuable homeland security assets as well. I would like to take the observation of "Navy Day" to salute their efforts and to acknowledge the vital roles and important military capabilities performed at these three facilities.

Navy Day was established on October 27, 1922 by the Navy League of the United States. October 27 was suggested by the Navy League to recognize Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. Roosevelt had been an Assistant Secretary of the Navy and supported a strong Navy as well as the idea of Navy Day. In addition, October 27 was the anniversary of a 1775 report issued by a special committee of the Continental Congress favoring the purchase of merchant ships as the foundation of an American Navy.

As a community, we owe special thanks to the members of the naval family that sacrifice their own safety to protect our nation. They define the spirit of public service and we are grateful for their past and present services. Over the past several months, in Iraq and around the world, their purpose has been the protection and security of our people, and the promotion of peace, stability and the rule of law in Iraq, the Middle East and the international community, and they should know that a grateful nation supports their service and sacrifice.

We celebrate Navy Day in commemoration of past and present servicemen and women of the Navy as they have fought the enemies of freedom and prevailed. Their courage and resolve is fundamental to our security and way of life. Navy Day gives us the opportunity to appreciate their achievements and gain inspiration from their bravery. They succeed because they are dedicated to the values of this country and to its national security in the face of global terrorism.

The Navy plays a key role in the lives of thousands of Maryland residents, and thus I continue to place the future of the Navy in Maryland as one of my highest priorities. As the Department of Defense, the White House and Congress prepare for the next round of base closings in 2005, I am certain that the overwhelming support of the community, the important three-way partnership between federal, state, and local officials necessary to protect this powerful economic engine for the state, and the valuable homeland security assets of these bases prove the important contributions to our nation's defense and prosperity of Southern Maryland's defense installations.

May God continue to bless our country and may God continue to bless the men and women of the fifth districts Naval bases.